

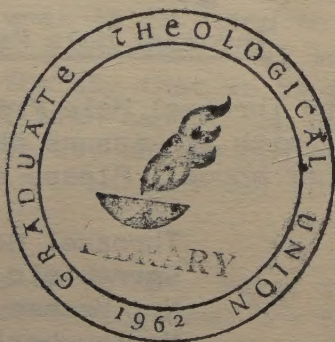


*THROSSEL HOLE*

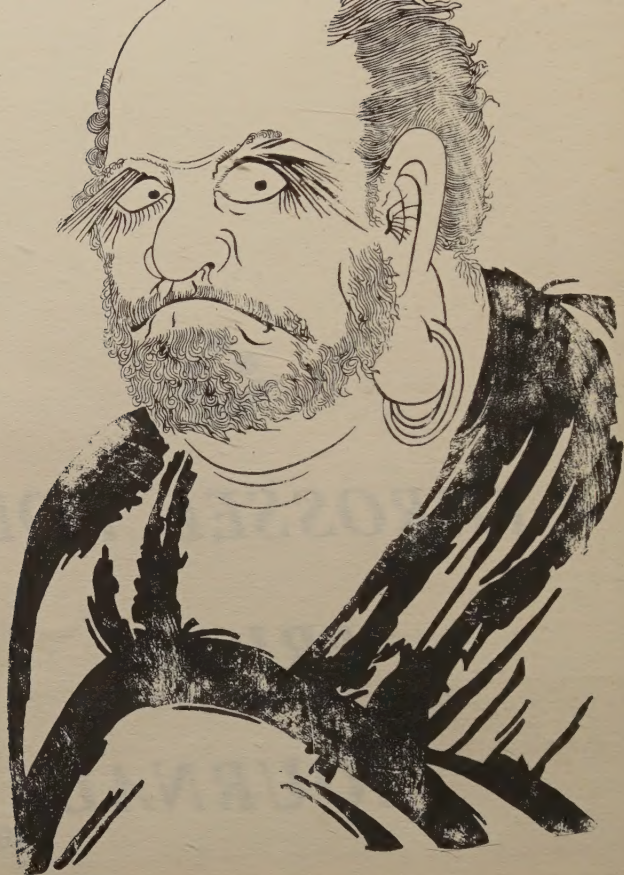
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## Meditation is a Perilous Activity

It is often said that meditation is a perilous activity and that one should never start it lightly, but dabbling in it. It is a perilous activity because when done truly, after a time you start to see aspects of yourself that you would before never have believed existed, and indeed would have been affronted by the suggestion that they did. It is not for most people the good things that they have been hiding from themselves, but rather the greeds and hates that we develop our amazing ingenuity at blocking out of our awareness.

Once these things begin to appear, it is very important to see them in the right perspective. For example we begin to realise that for as far back as we can see we have been living our lives from a basis of hate - I want it all for me and damn the others, they don't count - in fact actually working on our hate, working things over in our minds, working ourselves up - when we start to see that all those negative qualities we really are a part of ourselves, we need to take care that we do not get carried away by despondency but learn to see the problem for what it is - and to see that it can be positively used. The fact that we have lived our lives up to now in the way that we have and have these problems to deal with cannot now be changed. The problems are with us, and we can either take a realistic view or else try in some way to escape from dealing with them.

The mind can find escapes in so many ways, it has many years of practice, but once having seen the fact that one's life is and that therefore it can be better, no escape can be wholly satisfactory; like the opening of the poem "The Hound of Heaven":-  
(Francis Thompson)

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;  
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;  
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways  
Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears  
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.

Up vistaed hopes I sped;  
And shot, precipitated,  
Adown Titanic glooms of chasmed fears,  
From those strong Feet that followed, followed after  
But with unhurrying chase,  
And unperturbed pace,  
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,  
They beat - and a Voice beat  
More instant than the Feet -  
"All things betray thee, who betrayest Me."

To take a realistic view of the problem is in the first place to accept it, that it exists and so needs dealing with; to do this we have to climb down from the pedestal on which we usually place ourselves and accept our own humanity.

It is then necessary to see that it is not bad that we have problems in this way, but rather we should be very grateful for them, for by their aiming and hitting us hard enough so that we can no longer ignore them, our feet for a moment or two touch the ground and we can see what it is that we should be doing. What our training is becomes clear, and we can if we wish go on and deal with the selfish side of ourselves. We do this not by trying to fight it, suppress it or otherwise carve it out of ourselves, but by accepting that it is there and letting go our grip on it. In the cure of hate we may see that we spend so much energy actively hating when all we need do is stop the bickering that goes on in our heads and look at what is really going on.

It is by means of the problems that we have that



are able to grow; they are the means by which we can enlighten ourselves.

Daishin Morgan.

### News and Events

New Abbot: On August 12th Rev. Jisho Perry arrived from America with his daughter. Rev. Perry has taken over as Abbot from Rev. Daiji Strathern who has returned to Shasta Abbey. We welcome Rev. Perry and Eryn into the community and wish them a successful stay.

Building Programme: We would like to thank Mr. Johnson, who lives locally, for the donation of a stone wall which will be an invaluable addition to our building programme.

Fare Fund: We would like to thank all those who have contributed to Rev. Daiji Strathern's fare fund to the U.S.A. To date we have received £550, sufficient to pay Daiji's fare to America and Rev. Perry's fare here. Daiji's return fare is still outstanding and all contributions will be gratefully received.

Posters: Many thanks to Phil McCabe for his donation of posters of Bodhidharma which are on sale at the priory.

Marriage: On August 21st Rev. Daiji Strathern performed the marriage ceremony of Stewart McFarlane and Anne Ward in Sacristy. Anne is a Classics graduate of Lancaster University, and Stewart is continuing post graduate research in Buddhist studies at Durham University.

Postulancy: Dave Plowright became a postulant on 5th July. We welcome him, and wish him all success in his training.

New Shed: We have constructed a new shed which will be used for storing coal, wood and honey equipment.

## Do Not Be Angry

"There is no retiring, no going, no Truth, no 1.  
there is a brilliant sea of clouds, there is a  
dignified sea of clouds."

Often we feel that we have been wronged, that our efforts have been taken in vain, that we are not being appreciated. Perhaps we have been given some task to do, and, against what seem almost insurmountable odds, we have endeavoured to do our best. And then our boss or our Teacher turns around and tells us to do it again, that we haven't tried, that what we have done is unsatisfactory. Usually at this point we become overwhelmed with anger, indignation and self-  
"What right has he to criticise. He doesn't know how hard I tried, what effort I put into the task! It isn't fair!" Well, perhaps it isn't fair. And yet again it is. For by thinking that we are right and that someone else is wrong, we fall into the trap of pride.

However deeply we may be sure of something and however hard we may feel we have tried, there is always the possibility that we could be wrong, that we could have tried harder. When we try in that way to define limits, we begin to discriminate between what we are and what we are not, between what we are capable of and what we are not, between what we know and what others do not. The more justified we feel in these opinions the more strongly we compound the delusion. The more "right" we are, the more we alienate ourselves from reality; the more hurt we allow ourselves to feel, the more we hurt ourselves by shrouding ourselves in fog. If we can drop all these ideas of right and wrong, fair and unfair, self and other, birthright and imposition, and allow each situation to arise naturally without attempting to precondition it; if we can at



the same time allow our selves to arise naturally without preconceived ideas about who we are, then we will not feel that we have been wronged, that things are unfair and the world is about to get us. (Why me!?) If there is no self, where is the self to be hurt or wronged? Each moment arises naturally and we are but one facet of that moment. We are not a separate, self-sufficient, isolated entity projected into or imposed on by that moment as we usually suppose. When viewed in this way ourselves and others take on new aspects. We are no longer a victim of circumstances. We are those circumstances and in that sense we are invulnerable, for situations flow on from one another and that flow can never be terminated.

This does not mean that we our (selfish) selves are invulnerable, immortal or beyond pain. If we believe this then we fall again into pride and so repeat the cycle. We have to approach these situations with a spirit of humility. When we find humility we allow ourselves the possibility of discovery; of seeing that things may not be the way we suppose. Then we may be able to see that when our Teacher criticises us, or when things seem unfair or unjust, then Kanzeon is manifesting himself in order to teach

This is not always easy to see, for we are very attached to our delusions of self. It seems a paradox that Kanzeon is chiefly concerned here with teaching humility. If we can learn to accept each situation with gratitude and openness, however painful and senseless it may appear at first; if we are determined to look deeply into this situation to discover what we can learn from it, then we have already made the first step towards finding this humility. Then we may gradually learn to bow to our boss or our Teacher with respect and gratitude for the situation with which he is presenting us, with which he is teaching us.

Kozan Ball.

## Inadequacy

"There are times when the will is adequate but words are not; there are times when words are adequate and the will is not; there are times when both words and will are adequate and times when neither are so.' Both will and words are existence, time, flow; adequacy and inadequacy are existence, time, flow. When it is adequate it is unfinished; when it is inadequate it is already completed; will is a donkey and words are a horse; words mean horse and will means donkey; existence, time, flow, is as this." \*

Most people come to religion because they feel something to be lacking in their lives. For many of us this manifests as a feeling of spiritual impoverishment, a feeling that we are fundamentally poor, basic inadequate. We run around trying to fill this empty hole we feel within us, as children with new toys and ice creams, as adults with money, fame, success, friends etc. The process may become very complex; as the "Sandokai" scripture says, "Here born we clutch at things and then compound delusion later on by following ideals." Perhaps we hate others for their supposed superiority to us and become bitter, or we fear them, or we achieve our goals and the success fails to satisfy us, kind of falls to pieces in our hands. The details vary from person to person; the knots are tied in many different ways, but this whole way of life is doomed to failure, bound to cause suffering, for it is impossible to fill this hole for it never existed in the first place.

- \* "Zen is Eternal Life" by Roshi Jiyu Kennett, formerly published as "Selling Water by the River" p. 170, Shobogenzo: Uji (The Theory of Time) by Dogen.



In Zen we learn to sit still in the midst of this self-created chaos. And when we do so, we can begin to see the whole process for what it is. We see that we continually tie these knots for ourselves, or tighten them by fighting against them, and when we sit still they can begin to fall away. As we begin to know ourselves and become less attached to the hate and fear, we start to see how we ourselves have been causing our own and others' suffering. And so, as our meditation deepens, we begin to catch sight of something within us which knows itself to be real, is at peace with the world, which just sits still and has no concern with success, fame, adequacy, inadequacy or any of the other ideals which run us around. Even just catching a glimpse of this can be a great shock for it forces us to realise, if we want to see, that our whole basic attitude to life has been based on delusion, for we never were inadequate, we have all we need, there is no hole to be filled - though this does not mean we are perfect - and the meaning of life is to be found within life itself.

Zen training is finding and living out the reality of our life. And if we truly commit ourselves to this, the path lies clear before our eyes at each moment. It may not be an easy path; life is rarely easy or painless. But it can be joyful and meaningful. And we can learn from the obstacles, how to get up and go on when life seems determined to knock us down, learn that the vast featureless deserts of life have another side and the impenetrable jungles can be crossed, that the fogs and deep holes, the walls we persist in bashing our heads against, show us where we are going astray, wandering off the path. In this way the universe is a very compassionate place if we are open enough to accept it as such instead of continually fighting and ignoring it. If we live in this way, life is very ordinary but has a fullness and richness of its own. What we do may be the same as before, perhaps we become

successful painters or musicians if we have the capacity and inclination, millionaires if that is what we truly want, or perhaps just housewives or roadsweepers, perhaps we are half-witted idiots and cannot do anything at all, that in itself does not matter. But we do what we do because that is what we truly want in our hearts, not out of any feelings of poverty or inadequacy. Training is simply to live out one's full potential. After all, when we really look, what else is there to do

Jimyo Krasner.

### Priory Sales

The following are on sale from the Priory:-

Newsletter: £2 per year. 6 issues.

Books: Hardback edition of "Selling Water by the River". £2.

Zen Meditation Booklets: 80p.

Posters: Hand printed on rice paper. 60p.  
Bodhidharma or The Buddha Leaving Retreat.

Meditation Benches: £3.50.

All prices are post paid. Some items are slightly less if purchased at the Priory. Prices are effective from 1st September 1976.

Visitors should send a cheque in advance with their application form for retreats, and those staying for extended periods must pay in advance. No cash refunds will be given unless the application is rejected or the retreat is booked up. Any balances may be used for future retreats, visits, publications, benches etc. or Priory sales.



## The Willingness To See

"Men become deluded by things; blown like dust in the breeze, they run east and west; they rise and fall in society and their feet do not touch the ground of reality. If their hearts do not find the 'Real Place' their lives are nothing but an empty waste." \*

One of the major problems for anyone studying Zen is how to put the ideas into practice. Zen writing, scriptures and poetry is seductively attractive to the intellectual mind but empty without the experience of actual practice. We spend a good deal of our practice as priests simply trying to show others how to put the teaching into practice and many trainees sit there and ask to be shown but really don't want to do it for themselves.

Dogen says "the secret of life is will, words are its key." The will is our willingness to learn, our openness to ourselves and the situations that we create for ourselves. Will is not the force of strength that destroys obstacles in a single blow, but the still small voice that reminds us that we could be wrong. We are generally ready to blame outer circumstances for our states of mind. Our willingness to turn that around and see how our states of mind affect our circumstances is the measure of our ability to actually put the teaching into practice.

Words may be the key to exercising the will but without that exercise of our willingness to learn, the words are great obstacles; mountains of ideas that

\* "Zen is Eternal Life" by Roshi Jiyu Kennett, formerly published as "Selling Water by the River". p. 259, Denkoroku: Chapter 17, by Keizan.

stand between us and the Truth. We needn't throw out the words or walk away from the mountain because we are afraid to climb it, just take the first step.

The very first thing that we need to do is to see clearly and honestly just what we are doing. We have to be open and honest enough with ourselves just to see. It takes no greater physical effort and no greater mental strain, in fact it is so easy and simple, if somewhat painful, that we want it to be more complicated or more difficult and therefore we create fogs and obstacles. If the only thing you see is that there are fogs and obstacles that too is fine. But see them. See that we had to do a job again because we didn't bother to remember a minor detail, or we broke a dish or cut our finger because we weren't paying attention. It is life's little details that we have to see. In these little things we get a complete picture of our day.

This morning I woke up and didn't leap out of bed. I made more noise than necessary when walking round the zendo and I left my sandal by mistake at the shoe repair shop. These and a thousand other little details make up my day. If I want these things to be better, I have to pay more attention. But before I can do that, I first have to see just what I am doing. The biggest danger arises when we start to edit the day's events. We start to throw in our opinions and our desires. "I didn't really get angry" or "I wasn't that afraid", or even worse, we can't even remember what we did at all. Again, don't worry or fuss or analyse it, just note "I can't remember", or "I tried to make it seem better or worse than it really was". Sometimes the very best we can do is to see that we could have done better. The Buddha's not perfect, but he learns from his mistakes and he can't learn unless he can see just what he is doing, and sometimes it isn't a mistake, but when it is he admits it and admits it willingly.



The will is not necessarily aggressive or passive, either kind nor cruel. If it is helpful to think of it in terms of "willingness" or "openness" then think that way, but above all do it. Don't just sit there fiddling your thumbs or chewing your fingernails. Religion is real because we put it into practice. All the help we need is very close, and ever present; it lies within our own hearts.

When we see we must also see with the eye of compassion, and this also is just to see. Not to judge or criticize, not to praise or blame, but to see things just as they are, is to see with the eye of compassion. True kindness starts with honesty, and this too is an act of will. This is also "right effort". Don't just read the words or drink in the ideas. "If today you have exhausted kalpas, what time are you waiting for?"

Jisho Perry.

### Retreat Dates

We will be holding retreats on the following dates:-

September	11 - 12
September	25 - 26
October	9 - 10
October	23 - 24
November	13 - 14
November	27 - 28
December	4 - 5

We will also be holding a week retreat from December 17 to 23. A notice of retreat dates is included with the newsletter.

## Editorial

Progress in the New Zendo. We want to express our gratitude and appreciation for all the donations of money, labour, time and materials for the new zendo building.

Since our appeal earlier this year for interest free loans, a number of very generous loans and donations have been received, which have made it possible to buy sufficient concrete blocks, cement, window frames etc., to take advantage of the fine building weather.

At the moment we are up to damp proof course level, having completed all the setting out and levelling, and we are now learning the art of laying the blocks and the stone facing. We had intended originally to quarry the stone needed for this, but one of our neighbours, Mr. Johnson, has very kindly donated the stone from a disused boundary wall, most of which is already the right size, so this will save us much time and trouble. We hope to have the walls completed to eave level before the worst of the winter frost sets in.

We have purchased a secondhand commercial-sized Aga solid fuel stove for the new kitchen. We plan to use coal for all heating and cooking facilities to utilise the coal we have on the property. Financially we still need further interest free or low interest loans against our average monthly income of £140 from the covenants that people have made over 7 and 10 years to provide us with the necessary cash.

Daishin Morgan.





